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ABSTRACT

Women continue to be underemployed in leadership positions in educational settings, both in K-12 and in higher education. Early attempts to include women in leadership have proposed that women shape their behaviors to conform with male-oriented management models. This paper describes the success of a seminar called Women in Leadership, which was introduced into the educational leadership program at Eastern Michigan University in 1979. In response to demand, the course has been offered for the last 16 years. The seminar focuses on applying leadership strategies and developing leadership skills. Course content emphasizes the sociological and psychological concepts of women's development and gender-socialization processes. Leadership theory and its historical development are also examined. Over 200 women who had completed the course between 1979 and 1990 responded to a questionnaire. The majority of participants identified leadership and personal-development issues as the most beneficial components of the course. Women over 31 years old valued the personal-development objectives more strongly than did women in other age groups. Respondents said that the following four areas were moderately to extremely beneficial to women in leadership roles--coping, internal presentation, external presentation, and assertiveness. In summary, the course was successful because the content was personally meaningful to participants. A copy of the questionnaire is included. (Contains 32 references.) (LMI)

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WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP: ENACTING A NEW CURRICULUM IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION*

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An issue of continued interest and concern for those in higher education who work in the field of educational administration is that of the dearth of women employed in leadership positions in educational settings, both in K-12 and in higher education (Bagenstos, 1987; Edson, 1988; Hallinger and Murphy, 1991; Luebkemann & Clemens, 1994; Marietti & Stout, 1994; Mertz and McNeely, 1990; Mitchell, 1993; Montenegro, 1993; North, 1991; Pavan, 1989; Shakeshaft, 1989; Wesson & Grady, 1994). There is an obvious need for well-qualified women candidates who are ready and willing to pursue administrative opportunities in the educational arena at all levels. As institutions of higher education make efforts to address this need, questions arise. What should be the elements which comprise a preparation program for prospective female administrators? Is there need for making content changes in the array of courses already in place for training educational leaders? What new courses specifically targeted at unique issues relevant to *female* leadership need to be developed?

The preponderance of research forming the core of coursework in typical educational administration preparation programs has involved primarily male role incumbents in male-dominated organizations. This is true for the K-12 school administration sequence as well as that for higher education administration. In general, core concepts in educational administration research have, as their foundation and centerpiece, theory that was developed in corporate and industrial settings, beginning with the period of the Industrial Revolution and progressing into contemporary models. In this theory, effective organizations and the roles for those who work in these organizations are structured and defined according to the propensities and beliefs of the people who have been their shapers, i.e., males, primarily Caucasian. A review of theorists currently listed in educational administration texts is likely to indicate a group that is entirely, or almost

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entirely, male. Such theorists include: Herbert Simon (1957), Daniel Griffiths (1959), Douglas McGregor (1960), Rensis Likert (1961), Andrew Halpin (1966), Peter Drucker (1974), Ralph Stogdill (1974), James MacGregor Burns (1978), Bernard Bass (1981), Paul Hersey & Kenneth Blanchard (1988), among others.

Effective leadership, by definition of these theorists, is a set of behavioral indicators that is dominated by hierarchical structures that are characteristically masculine. It was not by accident, then, that the first books written specifically for *women* who sought to enter leadership roles in organizations generally proposed that women shape their behaviors to fit the male models developed by the theorists, i.e., discard, to a great extent, that which was more characteristically "female," and become more masculine in their behaviors. Behaviors that were considered "good management" skills were typically those built on a hierarchical model typical of male socialization processes that established clear lines of authority and "chains of command." Also included were team-type activities of the sports' world model, and the utilitarian friendships found in the political realities of support and cooperation for the organization's sake (Hennig & Jardim, 1976). Examples of this "first generation" of women's books include *The Managerial Woman* (Hennig & Jardim, 1976) and *Games Mother Never Taught You: Corporate Gamesmanship for Women* (Harragan, 1977).

This top-down approach to leadership resulted in keeping organizations functioning "comfortably," but it had negative repercussions for the women role incumbents in these organizations. Women were using strategies for leadership that were not generally a part of the female socialization process. Tannen (1990) notes that "pretending that women and men are the same hurts women, because the ways they are treated are based on the norms for men" (p. 16). The realization that something was not quite right with the situation began to be felt and heard in the mid-80's. Concerns were expressed in the literature, including texts such as *Feminine Leadership, or How to Succeed in Business Without Being One of the Boys* (Loden, 1985) and *The Female Advantage: Women's Ways of Leadership* (Helgesen, 1990), titles which prior to this time would have been considered oxymorons. Additional support for taking a new look at the expectations for women in administrative roles, and in the ways by which these women are prepared for leadership roles, was evident in texts such as *In a Different Voice* (Gilligan, 1982) and *Making Connections* (Gilligan, 1990); *Women's Ways of Knowing*

(Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986); and *You Just Don't Understand* (Tannen, 1990).

A seminar entitled "Women in Leadership" (WIL) was introduced into the Educational Leadership program at Eastern Michigan University in 1979, to address the unique considerations of female leadership behavior in training programs for prospective educational leaders. Specific applications to the practice of leadership strategies and leadership skill development for women were the main goals of the seminar. Primary consideration in course content was given to the sociological and psychological concepts of women's development and gender socialization processes. Leadership theory and its historical development were examined in light of these concepts and processes.

Initially offered as a pilot program, the course was extremely well-received by the students, most of whom were women. Demand for it has been such that it has been held at least once, and most often twice, a year in the ensuing sixteen years. Additionally, a follow-up course has been initiated, "Next Steps for Women in Leadership," to augment and further develop the skills' development begun in the first seminar.

The overwhelming majority of those who enrolled in the Women in Leadership seminar noted (via course evaluations) what a major impact the course had on their thinking and development. It appeared that the course was addressing needs in leadership preparation for these women students that were not being met in other, more traditional Educational Leadership classes. Survey research was used to determine exactly how and why the seminar was so successful.

Over two hundred women who had completed the WIL course between 1979 and 1990 were asked to respond to a questionnaire concerning the methods and content of the course, including:

- information on demographics concerning age and professional career activities;
- opinions about the felt benefits of the specific objectives of the WIL seminar, of the seminar overall, and of the career plan developed in the seminar;
- opinions about the possible benefits of specific objectives of a planned follow-up seminar, and suggestions for this seminar's content; and

- opinions about the felt importance of specific leadership skills' training for women. These skills were based on theory researching women's behaviors, beliefs, and value systems (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan, 1990; Tannen, 1990).

Completed surveys were received from almost 80% of the sample. A copy of the questionnaire is included in the appendix of this report, and information concerning the specific statistical tests used to analyze the data is available in Schmitt (1994).

The respondents, ranging in age from 21 to 57 years of age, were predominantly K-12 professionals, with approximately 10% working in non-school and post secondary settings. The average length of time respondents had been in their profession at the time they enrolled in the course was 10.38 years, with approximately one-third having 5 years or less professional experience.

The thirteen WIL course objectives were grouped, for analysis purposes, into four major categories:

- personal development (learning outcomes #6, #7, #11, #12, and #13);
- leadership issues (learning outcomes #3, #4, and #5);
- gender issues (learning outcomes #1, #2, and #10); and
- network issues (Learning outcomes #8 and #9).

Statistical tests showed the objectives dealing with **leadership issues** and **personal development** were equally beneficial, and both categories were more beneficial than that dealing with **gender issues**; but the objectives dealing with **gender issues** were more beneficial than those dealing with **network issues**, and was true across the distribution of ages and years of professional experience. However, all thirteen objectives were found to have mean ratings on the 0-4 scale indicating more than moderate benefits (range: 2.85-3.45).

The findings of this research suggest that the intrinsic content of course objectives (leadership, personal development and gender issues), rather than the setting in which it occurs (opportunity for networking among the class members), are the most important factors in the success of the seminar. It also appears that those objectives which relate directly and personally to the students in their perceived and/or anticipated roles as educational leaders, **leadership issues** and **personal development**, are the ones which women feel

are the most beneficial. It is obvious that the personal connection of course content is very important to women students. As a result, those who prepare educational administrators should review the content of courses to determine if they have intrinsically meaningful objectives; or whether abstract and relatively sterile theories and concepts are studied in a way that has little personal significance for the women students.

The data of this survey indicated that more mature students, those 31 years of age and older, valued the **personal development** objectives more strongly than did the other age groups, and that those in the middle of their careers (11-15 years of experience) and the most mature learners (51+ years old) valued all categories of learning outcomes as equally beneficial. As a result, those who prepare educational leaders may be well advised to shape the relative emphasis of their course objectives according to the levels of professional experience and the age range of class members, perhaps providing a menu of course assignments from which students can select those tasks and outcomes that are most meaningful to them as learners. Thus, women students will be encouraged to build connections with those areas that will be most personally meaningful and build professional foundations.

The last section of the survey asked former students their opinions about the felt importance of specific leadership skills' training for women. These four skill areas--**coping, internal presentation, external presentation,** and **assertiveness**--were compositions of information from women-related literature regarding socialization factors and women's psychological development, and from basic theories of leadership and group dynamics. Data indicated that all four of the skills, with their sub skills, were perceived to be moderately to extremely beneficial for women in leadership roles. Again, those who prepare educational leaders would find that integrating objectives such as these in current course offerings, or developing new courses around this content, would be extremely beneficial for the women students in their programs. It would also be very helpful to the male students to be exposed to this content. Not only would it help them be better prepared to deal with gender diversity in the work situation, but it would also encourage them to develop a more complete and well-rounded personal repertoire of leadership skills.

In summary, it seems that the objectives of the WIL seminar and the suggested specific leadership skills outlined are extremely beneficial to these women students, and by extension, to other women students in leadership programs, because the course content is intrinsically meaningful and delivered in a format that recognizes the "real," personal dimensions of "being a woman" and "in a leadership role." This research strongly suggests that both of these factors need to be addressed in the training that is provided for women students in educational administration programs. The result will be increased effectiveness at all levels in educational organizations, as these women--well-prepared, committed and qualified--move into educational leadership roles.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE/WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

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WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP SURVEY

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to assist me by completing the following questionnaire. Your responses to the these questions will be used by the Educational Leadership program to improve its current course offerings, and to assist in the preparation of new course offerings, with the aim to better serve women seeking to become leaders in education. All responses will be absolutely confidential. Data will be aggregated and reported in group form only, with no identification of specific responses.

Demographics

The following questions will help to determine if training needs are different for women at different times in their lives and/or in their careers.

1. What was your age at the time you enrolled in Women in Leadership Seminar (WIL)?_____

2. How many years had you been in your profession at the time you enrolled in WIL?_____

3. List chronologically your professional positions since completing WIL (EX: Elementary teacher, 1985-87; Reading consultant, 1987-present):

_____

_____

_____

4. **Check as many** of the following statements as are true of you since WIL:

_____I am not currently in a leadership position, but I am actively pursuing one.
_____I am not currently in a leadership position, and have not actively pursued one.
_____I am not currently in a leadership position, but I plan to actively pursue one in the next several years.
_____I am currently in a leadership position, the same one I had prior to WIL, and am actively pursuing another one.
_____I am currently in a leadership position, the same one I had prior to WIL, and am not actively pursuing another one.
_____I have achieved a new leadership position, and am actively pursuing another one.
_____I have achieved a new leadership position, and am not actively pursuing another one.
_____I have decided to stop pursuing a desired leadership position because of personal reasons, such as change in family status, personal time demands, etc.
_____I have been kept from achieving a desired leadership position by external factors beyond my control, such as bias or politics on the part of the hiring agency, lack of opportunity, etc.
Please state reason:_____

If you have not checked any of the above statements, describe your current situation regarding the seeking of leadership positions:

_____

About the WIL Class..

The following questions are about the Women in Leadership Seminar which you completed in the Educational Leadership program. Responses to these questions will help determine the effectiveness of the content of this course.

5. Please **circle** the number that best reflects your ratings of **each** of the following "learning outcomes" from WIL, according to how **beneficial** you feel it has been for you in your subsequent professional development.

	Not 0	Slightly 1	Moderately 2	Quite 3	Extremely 4
Awareness of gender-related socialization processes	0	1	2	3	4
Understanding of gender-related perceptual differences	0	1	2	3	4
Understanding of job vs. career	0	1	2	3	4
Identification of various leadership functions	0	1	2	3	4
Identification of various leadership demands	0	1	2	3	4
Identification of personal leadership talents/potential	0	1	2	3	4
Development of proactive strategies for personal growth and development	0	1	2	3	4
Involvement with a group of like-minded women (class members)	0	1	2	3	4
Opportunity for networking	0	1	2	3	4
Awareness of past & current status of women in leadership roles	0	1	2	3	4
Identification of processes for use in career advancement	0	1	2	3	4
Acceptance of responsibility for one's own self-development	0	1	2	3	4
Development of positive self-esteem	0	1	2	3	4

6. In addition to those listed above, what **other** "learning outcome(s)" did you achieve as a result of WIL?

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. What **one** "learning outcome" from WIL was the most beneficial? **Why** was it so beneficial?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. **Overall**, how beneficial were the "learning outcomes" you gained from WIL? (Circle one number.)

Not 0	Slightly 1	Moderately 2	Quite 3	Extremely 4

9. **Mark** the column that best reflects your agreement with **each** of these statements about the Five-Year Plan developed in WIL.

	Strongly Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have found it to be very beneficial in giving direction to my professional (work-related) development.				
I have found it to be very beneficial in giving direction to my personal (non work-related) decisions.				
I have not used it at all since I wrote it.				
I have reviewed it at least once a year.				
I have been working at it and have made progress on achieving the goals within the broad time frames I planned.				
I have adjusted it, but it is still essentially the same.				
I have found that I have had to substantially modify it because it was not workable.				
I have achieved the plan, and have written a new one.				
I have achieved the plan, but I have never written a new one.				

About the Next Class...

The following questions are about the proposed advanced seminar entitled Next Steps for Women in Leadership (WIL II), which is planned to be offered in the Educational Leadership program. Responses to these questions will help determine the content of this course.

10. Please **circle** the number that best reflects your ratings of **each** of the following "expected learning outcomes" of the Next Steps Seminar, according to how **beneficial** you feel it could be for you in your anticipated professional development.

	Not 0	Slightly 1	Moderately 2	Quite 3	Extremely 4
Review (overview) of major concepts from WIL	0	1	2	3	4
Update information on current literature in field of women in leadership	0	1	2	3	4
Understanding of leadership concepts and development of strategies for:					
a. Shared personal vision	0	1	2	3	4
b. Information management	0	1	2	3	4
c. Dealing with strengths/weaknesses	0	1	2	3	4
d. Communication	0	1	2	3	4
e. Empowerment	0	1	2	3	4
f. Problem/conflict mgmt./resolution	0	1	2	3	4
Guided practice in leadership strategies for:					
a. Shared personal vision	0	1	2	3	4
b. Information management	0	1	2	3	4
c. Dealing with strengths/weaknesses	0	1	2	3	4
d. Communication	0	1	2	3	4
e. Empowerment	0	1	2	3	4
f. Problem/conflict mgmt./resolution	0	1	2	3	4
Understanding of life stages/life transitions, & their relationship to prof. development	0	1	2	3	4
Enhancement of networking skills/strategies	0	1	2	3	4
Development of a "Next Steps" Professional Development Plan	0	1	2	3	4

11. In addition to those described above, what **other** learning outcomes would be beneficial for you in the "Next Steps" class?

_____

_____

_____

12. Do you have any **suggestions for books** or other materials (print or A-V) that would be beneficial in the "Next Steps" class?

_____

_____

_____

13. Any **other suggestions** for "Next Steps"?

_____

_____

_____

Skill Identification

The following questions will help to identify specific leadership skills' training that is important for women.

14. Please **circle** the number that best reflects your ratings of **each** of the following leadership skills according to how **important** you feel it is for women to receive training in them.

	Not 0	Slightly 1	Moderately 2	Quite 3	Extremely 4
Coping					
a. Ability to manage conflict through collaboration and shared goal-setting in the area of time demands.	0	1	2	3	4
b. Ability to manage conflict through collaboration and shared goal-setting in the area of role demands.	0	1	2	3	4
c. Ability to manage conflict through collaboration and shared goal-setting in the area of perceptual demands of differing constituencies.	0	1	2	3	4
Internal Presentation					
a. Ability to recognize innate personal skills as base for healthy self-confidence.	0	1	2	3	4
b. Ability to maintain a self-concept that is motivated by response to the needs of the group, but balanced by attention to personal needs.	0	1	2	3	4

	Not 0	Slightly 1	Moderately 2	Quite 3	Extremely 4
External Presentation					
a. Ability to develop and use contacts within the profession to build an information system.	0	1	2	3	4
b. Ability to develop and use contacts within the profession to build an advice system.	0	1	2	3	4
c. Ability to develop and use contacts within the profession to build a support system.	0	1	2	3	4
Assertiveness					
a. Ability to communicate honestly and directly.	0	1	2	3	4
b. Ability to recognize the rights of of others while maintaining one's own rights.	0	1	2	3	4

15. Any **suggestions for other experiences** that ought to be part of a leadership training program for women?

_____

_____

_____

16. Any other comments?

_____

_____

_____

17. Would you be willing to be interviewed as part of a follow-up to this survey? YES NO

- - - -